

trustees, and acted upon, they would have little for which to blame themselves; for did they err at all, it would be only in matters of detail; they could only be guilty of errors of judgment.

THE NECESSITY AND IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SCHOOL-HOUSES.

After commending the school trustees of Napanee for erecting good school-houses and for making their schools free to all classes of the community Mr. Bogert says:—Some people seem to think that all that is necessary for the education of children is a good master, books, maps, and other material, and sitting room. A nice, airy, cheerful room, they will tell you, is all very well, if it can be easily obtained, but certainly not one of the requisites. Let me ask such persons to look back to the time of their own school days, and if it was their lot to be penned up in a close, dingy room, perhaps they will remember being overcome at times with a drowsiness, which in spite of their just remonstrances cost them a verbal, if not a more touching correction from their teacher. Perhaps they will remember those stupefying headaches, which unfitted them for the time for the acquisition of knowledge. But perhaps they have forgotten these things; then I would only ask them to spend a few hours with the children in the school-room of this village, and I shall be surprised if at the end of that time they do not wonder that the children get on as well as they do. Medical men will tell you that the soundness of the mind depends, to a great extent, upon the health of the body, and that for the latter good ventilation and plenty of light are requisite. And remember, it is not the children alone that suffer in such cases as we have been speaking of, but the teachers as well: and if no higher motive, surely the improvement of your children, which must depend to a certain extent upon the condition of the teacher's mind, should make that a matter of importance to you. The steps then which the Trustees have taken towards providing suitable buildings for our schools are worthy of the commendation of all—an object which will be a boon not only to teachers and children, but also to the people at large: nay, more, for if in the proposed buildings some little consideration be paid to appearances, the village itself will be adorned; the architectural taste of the people at large, and especially of the children, will be improved, and these latter will have an additional evidence of the interest which is taken in them by their elders, and an additional inducement to profit by the benefits which are conferred upon them.

DIFFICULTIES AGAINST WHICH SCHOOL TEACHERS HAVE TO CONTEND.

Listen to that very numerous class who tell us that the reason why the children do not make more progress is, simply because their teachers are incompetent, or negligent, or both. I believe that they who take this view form a very numerous class. I believe that a great many persons, when they find that their children do not progress as rapidly as they had hoped or expected, at once satisfy themselves that the fault lies in the teacher. And it is to a great extent because the class is so large that my sympathies for the teacher are so great. Of course I readily admit that if a teacher is incompetent or negligent, i. e., if he cannot or will not teach, the children's education must be impeded; at the same time I deny that if the children do not progress, therefore the fault lies entirely with the teacher. If the children all possessed good capacities for learning, and if they received all the out-of-school assistance (if I may so call it) which they ought, and none of the out-of-school hindrances, and still they did not progress, then I might agree with you in blaming the teacher. But how seldom is the child so circumstanced! There is still another condition over which the teacher has no control, and which may materially affect the progress of the children: and that is the excessive number of scholars. This people are apt to forget; they do not consider that all minds are not similarly constituted, and that the form in which instruction is conveyed must be adapted to these several minds. They do not consider the great difference which exists in the temperaments of different children, and that different methods must be made use of in governing them. If people did consider these things they could not fail to perceive that the greater the number of children under a master's care, the more difficult must be the task of training their minds, both intellectually and morally. Surely then we should not be too hasty in blaming the teacher as the sole or even chief cause of backwardness in the children under him. We should be more inclined to bear in mind the course of preparation which he must undergo before he can be declared competent for the discharge of his duties—the time and money which he must spend in acquiring the necessary qualifications—the nature of his work—the great trial of patience which it necessitates—and all the difficulties which daily beset him, and to which I have already alluded; all these things we should bear in mind, and then I think the cases will not be many in which the teacher will be found more worthy of our blame than of our sympathy.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS ON WHAT THEY TEACH.

I would now add a few remarks directed to school teachers and to those who propose becoming such, in the shape of warnings against some mistakes into which they are liable to fall. And first, with reference to *what they teach*. There is a great danger of teacher's paying particular attention to the higher and more ornamental branches of education, to the neglect of the more ordinary and necessary branches. And indeed, when we look into the matter, we can scarcely blame those that fall into this error. When we consider the great competition which exists in this profession—when we consider, as we do with regret, that the question whether a person is to be a teacher in a certain school or not, often depends upon the amount of outward display he can make, and the greatness of his pretensions—when we consider that this desire to teach the higher branches on the part of the teacher, is very frequently seconded by the desire of the parents that these subjects should have the especial attention of their children—and when we consider that such parents generally measure the progress of their children by the number of ologies and onomies which they pretend to be learning—when we consider all these things, we feel inclined to make some allowances for those teachers who commit so great a fault. I call it a fault, and I do so, because I think that it defeats the object, or one of the great objects of education. Were we to put the question—what are the chief objects of an ordinary education?—a very large proportion of the community would be satisfied with giving some such answer as this: the chief object of education is the granting information on the various branches of learning which it comprises.—In other words they look upon the minds of those to be educated as so many store-houses to be filled, or *crammed* if possible, with facts already ascertained. But this is a great mistake, this is not the chief object of education. The mind must not be considered solely or chiefly as a store-house, but rather as a factory. Its owner must be taught the uses of the machinery, if I may so express myself, with which it has been furnished by our Great Creator; the mind must be taught not only to store away the facts which are the works of the minds of others, but also, and more especially, to create facts for itself. In other words, it must be taught not only to remember, but also to think: and this latter should be the great object of education.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS ON THEIR MANNER OF TEACHING.

And now with reference to the *manner of teaching* I shall not attempt to go into this subject to any extent, merely warning teachers against an error into which some seem to fall, the error of neglecting the senses as means by which to reach the mind, and, on the contrary, endeavouring to cram what they would teach directly into the memory, and perhaps to force it home by the blows of a cow-hide, neglecting the warning of Dr. Temple, 'not to forget wisdom in teaching knowledge.' But I dare say I can best convey my meaning by the following story, slightly altered from the original:—"Some years ago," says Dr. Brown, of Edinburgh, "I was in one of the wildest recesses of the Perthshire highlands. It was in autumn, and the little school supported mainly by the chief, who dwelt all the year round in the midst of his own people, was to be examined by a sort of School Superintendent whose native tongue was Gaelic, and who was as awkward and ineffectual, and sometimes as unconsciously indecorous, in the English, as a Cockney is in his kilt. It was a great occasion: the keen eyed, firm-limbed, brown cheeked little fellows were all in a buzz of excitement as we came in, and before the examination began every eye was looking at us strangers, as a dog looks at his game or when seeking it. They knew everything we had on, every thing that could be known *through their senses*. Well then the work of the day began, the mill was set a going, and what a change! In an instant their eyes were like the windows of a house with the blinds down; no one was looking out: everything blank; their very features changed; their jaws fell; their cheeks flattened; they drooped and looked ill at ease, stupid, drowsy, sulky—and getting them to speak, or think, or in any way to energize, was like getting any one to come to the window at three of a summer's morning, when if they do come, they are half awake, rubbing their eyes and growling. So with my little Celts. They were like an idle and half asleep collie by the fireside, as contrasted with the collie on the hill and in the joy of work. I noticed that any thing they really knew roused them somewhat; what they had merely to transmit or pass along as if they were a tube through which the master blew the pea of knowledge into our faces, was performed as stolidly as if they were nothing but a tube. At last the teacher asked where Sheffield was, and was answered. It was then pointed to by the dux, as a dot on a skeleton map. And now came a flourish. What is Sheffield famous for?—Blank stupor, hopeless vacuity, till he came to a sort of sprouting Dougal Cratur—almost as wee, and as glegg, and as towsy about the head as my own kintail terrier—who was trembling with keenness; he shouted out something which was